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The Ranch Girl

A Comedy
in Four Acts

THE RANCH GIRL.

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS.

ACT FIRST . *Open space near a Southwestern Texas
Railway Station*

ACT SECOND *Interior of a Ranch House*

ACT THIRD *Same as Act Second*

ACT FOURTH *Same as Act First*

PLACE *Southwestern Texas*

TIME *The Present*

INCIDENTALLY SHOWING THE POSSIBILITY OF
WRITING ENGLISH COMEDY IN A STYLE
BOTH NATURAL AND METRICAL. THE LINES
CONTAIN THREE BEATS AND HAVE NO MORE
CHANGES IN METRE THAN SUCH POEMS AS
THE IL PENSEROSO OF MILTON, OR THE
CHRISTABEL OF COLERIDGE, FROM WHICH
LATTER THE FOLLOWING IS TAKEN :

*There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can, etc.*

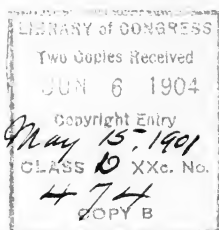
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Characters.

HARRY MERRIMAN.—A wealthy young man from New York, and graduate of Harvard, who is visiting the Ranch country in company with Alice Alwell and Betsy Blinder, to the latter of whom he is engaged to be married.

LAYTON LORN.—A young man from Boston who, for some years, has been proprietor of a Ranch; in love with Alice Alwell and brother of Winnie Lorn.

THOMAS GALL.—An Eastern man who also is proprietor of a ranch; somewhat of a misanthrope; uncle of both Alice Alwell and Betsy Blinder.

FOODLE.—Servant of Layton Lorn.

WINNIE LORN.—Young lady from Boston, sister of Layton Lorn, and on a visit to his Ranch.

ALICE ALWELL.—Young lady from New York, cousin of Betsy Blinder, niece of Thomas Gall, and on a visit to his Ranch; in love with Layton Lorn.

BETSY BLINDER.—Young lady from New York, cousin of Alice Alwell, niece of Thomas Gall, and on a visit to his Ranch; engaged to be married to Harry Merriman.

Waiter, Members of a traveling Company of Singers, Cowboys or Herdsmen of Ranch.

Dress and Properties.

HARRY MERRIMAN.—In Acts I and IV, a gentleman's traveling suit, with or without knee breeches. In Acts II and III, a girl's dress with bare or open neck and arms, feet visible, etc.

LAYTON LORN.—In Acts I and II, slouch hat, colored shirt, with or without coat, knee breeches or top boots; in Act IV, gentleman's traveling suit.

THOMAS GALL.—Slouch hat, colored shirt, with or without coat, knee breeches or top boots.

FOODLE.—Slouch hat, colored shirt, top boots.

WINNIE LORN.—In Acts I and IV, either a traveling or a mountain dress; in Acts II and III, either a mountain or an indoor working dress; in Act I, a cap or a hat without a brim, and a veil, also flowers in hand. In Act II a hat that can be removed, apron, a note book and a bundle of clothes; also belt containing two pistols, but these are taken from a table; in Act IV, a hat and sunshade and a fan hanging from belt. Also a package of letters.

ALICE ALWELL, BETSY BLINDER.—Lady's walking or traveling suits, carrying umbrellas in Act I, and umbrellas with outside cloaks or water-proofs in Act III. Betsy has a fan hanging from a chain attached to her belt and in Act I has a bonnet without a brim and has a package containing a brooch.

WAITER.—A man's suit and a napkin.

TRAVELING SINGERS.—Either in fancy costume with knee breeches, or in men's ordinary traveling suits.

COWBOYS OR HERDSMEN.—Slouch hats, colored shirts, top boots, whips, etc.

THE RANCH GIRL.

ACT FIRST.

SCENE.—*Open space near a Southwestern Texas railway station. Mountain scenery backing. At right, between Upper and First Entrances, part of a small hotel or restaurant with a bench resting against its wall, and in front of it, near the middle of the stage, a table, behind which are three or more chairs. At left, between Upper and Second Entrances part of a railway station building with the sign "Junction" printed on it. Entrances Right Upper behind hotel, Right Second, by a door into hotel (where there might be a porch with steps), Right First, in front of hotel, Left Upper and Left Second. The curtain rising discloses members of a Traveling Band of Singers.*

FIRST SINGER. Have you noticed the echoes here?

SECOND SINGER. Very fine! worth giving a song, If merely to hear them applaud us.

ALL SING.

Oh, what is the matter, and why do we care
For an empty, visionless whiff of air?

Ah, though the wind be nothing to see,
It bends and batters and breaks the tree;
And oh, we know a breeze that serves
To shock and shiver and shatter the nerves,
And snuff the light of life with a breath;
It has nothing to see, but it ends in death—

Ho ho, ho ho,

That blow, blow, blow, blow, blow!

Oh, what is the matter, and why do we care
For a silent sight of the sunshine there?

Ah, though no sound may rouse the ear,
The bud and blossom of spring are here;
And oh, we know a sight so bright
It **cheers** the world like heavenly light,
Till far away fly doubt and **strife**;

It has nothing to hear, but it lures to life—

High high, high high,

That eye, eye, eye, eye, eye!

(*As the song ends the sound of an arriving train is heard.*)

FIRST SINGER. Hello! The train is coming!

SECOND SINGER. Suppose we see who is on it?

Exeunt—Left Second—ALL THE SINGERS.

Enter—Left Upper—GALL, closely followed by ALICE ALWELL. GALL has on a soft felt hat, colored shirt and top boots. ALICE is in a fashionable traveling costume. GALL is loaded down with an umbrella, valise, shawl-strap, etc. ALICE carries a sunshade.

GALL. So glad to see you two girls.

And, Alice, how you have grown!

The image, too, of your mother.

ALICE. You know how to compliment, uncle.

GALL. (*Looking around, then crossing the stage to bench in front of hotel, and placing luggage on or near it.*)

Your journey pleasant?

ALICE. Delightful,

Not a single detention.

GALL. No?

Attention in plenty, however.

(*Pointing toward Left.*)

ALICE. You mean Mr. Merriman?

GALL. Yes.

His running into you then

Was not an accident?

ALICE. No;

It was not "running into," but "after."

GALL. He seems to have clung to you, too,

As a needle clings to a magnet.

And which one forms the attraction?

(*Looking at her sharply.*)

ALICE. Miss Betsy, if you must know.

The two are engaged (*both sit at a table*).

GALL. (*Taking bill of fare from the table, and rapping for WAITER.*)

Engaged?

For long?—and why not married?

No cash for it?

ALICE. He has, yes.

The match is brilliant for her.

I have thought though—he met her at Cambridge—

It was only a college engagement.

GALL. And what is a college engagement?

ALICE. Why, that of a home-sick boy,
Who wants a mother or sister.

GALL. More prose than poetry, Alice,
In that.

ALICE. But his coming out here—

GALL. (*Rapping again for the WAITER.*) May
prove him a sensible man.

Our natures are much like buckets—
Slop over the most when jolted.

And what jolts more than a journey?

No wise man takes his physic

Until he has had it well shaken.

ALICE. You mean that Harry?—

GALL. (*Rapping once more for WAITER.*) I
mean

That it often might be as well

To take one's wedding journey

Before, not after, the church

Has shut one out from hearing,

Till he or his mate are dead,

Any more of the wedding music.

ALICE. But Harry is not like that.

He is never serious, uncle.

Enter—Right Second—WAITER.

GALL. (*To WAITER.*) You think it economy, eh!

To keep your customers waiting

Till at their hungriest? Well?

(*Looking at bill of fare and handing it to
ALICE*)—

And Alice, what will you have?

(*To WAITER.*) You serve a regular dinner?

WAITER. In half an hour.

GALL. (*Looking toward ALICE who nods approv-
ingly*).

Serve us then

A dinner for four.

(*To ALICE.*)

And so

You think your jovial friend

Not serious, Alice. I doubt it.

The birds that sing most are the birds

Whose natures the most need singing;

And the men that make merry the most

Are the men whose natures most need

A world that appears to be merry.

ALICE. With Harry it seems to be

His exhuberant life, bubbling over.

GALL. A student of human nature,

Or lunacy—much the same—
 Finds out that those whose wits
 Are the first to bubble over
 Are the first to lose their wits;
 That the mind whose thought comes first
 As a joke to be cracked, is the mind
 That is first to be cracked itself.
 Ay, Alice, the lightest moods,
 And the brightest too, are often
 Mere spray flung up from waves
 That a serious blow is tossing.

ALICE. Humph! You seem roiled yourself.

GALL. I married once you remember—
 Miss Betsy's aunt; and now
 Do you think that I live with her, eh?
(Looking toward Left Second Entrance.)
 But there they come. It reminds me
 That I must see to my donkeys.

GALL and ALICE rise.

*Exeunt—Right First—*GALL and ALICE.

*Enter—Left Second—*BETSY, *in fashionable traveling costume, wearing a hat or bonnet without a brim and carrying a fan, a large umbrella and a small package.*

BETSY. *(Looking back toward Left, and soliloquizing in a vexed tone.)*

Now, what is that Harry doing?

He has left me again, all alone.

I never saw such a—why!

(Sitting at the table and opening the package in her hand.)

I had almost forgotten the mail

That uncle just handed me.—Ah!—

(Opening the package, and taking from a box a brooch.)

The brooch Aunt Clara had promised.

Absurd to send it out here,

Though it was my birthday! Wait!—

(Looking toward the Left with a meditative air.)

It was when I told Harry I thought

It was he had invited us girls

To the ball at the Harvard club—

It was then he proposed to me. Humph!

(Looking at brooch, and then toward Left.)

I think I know who sent it.

Yet, I am not sure of it, am I?
And Harry?—Suppose it was not he?—
He ought to have done it, and I,
I mean to give him a lesson.
He has been so backward of late.

*Enter—Left Second—HARRY in traveling costume
—loaded down with shawl-straps, umbrellas,
valises, etc.*

BETSY. (*Rising and rushing at him, causing her
umbrella to be thrust violently toward him.*)

O, Harry, you dear old thing!

HARRY. Hold on. Do you think me a reindeer
To be gone for with an umbrella?

BETSY. (*Holding up the brooch.*)

But, Harry, just look at this brooch.

It has come already, you see.

And now you know my reason—

HARRY. (*Putting his luggage on one of the
chairs.*)

But I—

BETSY. No matter, now, Harry.

No need of your saying a word.

HARRY. It was not—

BETSY. Oh, no; it was not—

Not told me, but then I could guess.

HARRY. But it might be unjust—

BETSY. At least, not so to your heart;

Nor to mine, if I wanted to think it.

(*Suddenly changing the subject.*)

Are you going to leave soon, Harry?

HARRY. Depends on my business.

BETSY. What?

HARRY. On my business.

BETSY. Humph, what is that?

HARRY. (*Arranging the luggage.*)

Just now, attending to you.

BETSY. (*Shaking the brooch at him.*)

You would like to spend all of your life

Attending to some one's wants.

HARRY. But, really, now, that brooch—

BETSY. (*Coquettishly placing her fan on his
shoulder.*)

Come, come, what I said was true.

You would like to spend—

HARRY. Yes, but I

Was talking of getting, not spending,

Of business.

BETSY. Business?

HARRY. Yes—

The art of getting and keeping
What every one else is wanting.

BETSY. (*Taking the words as a compliment to herself.*)

Oh, Harry, you flatter one so!

Enter—Right Second—WAITER with tablecloth in hand.

HARRY. (*To WAITER.*)

Has any one ordered our dinner?

WAITER. (*To HARRY.*)

A man here ordered a dinner
For four.

HARRY. (*Pointing toward Right First Entrance.*)

Was it that man?

WAITER. (*Looking toward Right First Entrance.*)

Yes.

HARRY. All right! How soon can we have it?

WAITER. In twenty-five minutes, I think.

Exit—Right Second—WAITER—very slowly.

HARRY. (*Looking after the WAITER.*)

That waiter is like myself.

Whenever I have to wait,

I much prefer to sit down.

(*Motioning to chairs, BETSY and HARRY sit down.*)

BETSY. Do I look as well in this hat,

As I did in the other one, Harry?

HARRY. Oh, no.

BETSY. (*Rather reluctantly.*) Why, others think
"Yes."

And you ought to think, you ought,

That *I* always look well in *all* hats.

HARRY. But the other hat had a brim;

And, whenever the sun is shining,

Who *could* look as well at things

In a hat that has not a brim?

BETSY. (*Shaking her finger at him.*)

A regular Midas, Harry!

Turn everything that you touch—

HARRY. Into gold?

BETSY. No, something better.

HARRY. One tickling touch of my hand

- Could make one a Merriman, eh?
BETSY. It would be so much for us both
To be one in everything, Harry.
HARRY. You women all want that—
To be won; but some want the men
A little more *won* than themselves.
And when both are made one, which is it?
It is sometimes the *one* that is not *won*.
BETSY. How silly you are, when you try.
Last night I dreamt—
HARRY. About
Late suppers, or grandmothers, which?
BETSY. Shall I tell you? I thought I had wings.
HARRY. An angel?
BETSY. A humming bird—
HARRY. Humming?
At what?
BETSY. Why, around a rose
That rose—
HARRY. And fell—
BETSY. And fell?
Why, what do you think me describing?
HARRY. Why, humming in sleep, was it not?
Or the lungs that make the humming?
And rose and fell will fit either.
BETSY. My humming in sleep!—in sleep!
That is not a pleasant suggestion.
HARRY. Then what were you going to say?
BETSY. That rose round which I was humming,
Was you.
HARRY. And that reminds me
That *I* had a dream.
BETSY. What was it?
HARRY. I forget what the dream was about;
But when I woke up a musquito
Was humming and—
BETSY. Oh, now, Harry!
Enter—Right First—ALICE and GALL.
ALICE. Come look at our wagons out here.
HARRY and BETSY *rise.*
BETSY. (*After giving a spiteful look at HARRY,*
to GALL.)
A thirty-mile ride is long.
Do you think there will be any danger?
GALL. Not unless you fall out by the way.
The wagon has seats without backs.
Exeunt—Right First—ALICE and BETSY.

(GALL continues to HARRY.)

If you were but going with us—

HARRY. (*Placing his hand on his pistol pocket then extending hands.*)

My arms might support them, you think?

Exit—Right First—HARRY.

GALL. (*Looking away from HARRY.*)

If I know Betsy, I think

If you tried to support her long,

You would both fall out together.

Exit—Right First—GALL.

Enter—Left Upper—LAYTON LORN and WINNIE

LORN. LORN has broad-brimmed Mexican felt hat, colored shirt and high topped boots. WINNIE is in mountain costume and cap without brim (so that the veil, to be mentioned presently, can be bound over her eyes). She carries wild flowers in her hand, which, presently, she places on the table. She seats herself at the right of this table and LORN at the left.

LORN. Our team should have been here now.

You will shun another excursion.

I fear I have tired you out.

WINNIE. No, Laytie, not in the least.

I had such a lovely walk—

That is Foodle and I—before lunch.

He took me off on the hill;

And, the moment we reached its brow,

We saw just down below us

The dearest of little valleys,

All covered with prairie flowers,

Like a bed with a patch-work spread.

You see, I have brought you some.

(*She begins to make a little bouquet for a button hole.*)

LORN. I am glad that you take to flowers.

I fear you will find little else

Out here to enjoy.

WINNIE. I shall have,

For one thing, my brother Latie.

LORN. Not much of the time, I take it.

I am kept very busy, you know.

WINNIE. And then I shall have the sheep,

And the cows, and the dogs, and the men.

LORN. Such men! You will not take much

To them.

WINNIE. They are animals, too.

LORN. If you had your choice, I suppose,
You would rather have had them flowers.

WINNIE. I think so; for then, you know—
(*She rises, and begins to pin her bouquet on
LORN's breast.*)

LORN. At times, might be ornamental?

WINNIE. (*Standing off, and regarding the bouquet.*)

They are ornamental, at times.

LORN. To pin to, or tie to, Winnie?

There are no such men out here.

WINNIE. And no such women, old boy—
The reason why I am here with you.

LORN. A reason, as well, why I
Should father you, Winnie. See here—
Have been tempted again by those flowers.
You must keep your veil down—so.
(*Rising and pinning WINNIE's veil over her
face.*)

The sun is too bright for your eyes.

A girl that has measles at twenty
Must be treated as if she were ten.

*Enter—Right Upper—HARRY and BETSY, and
watch LORN and WINNIE, whose face is now
wholly concealed.*

BETSY. As I live! It is Layton Lorn.

I knew he had gone on a ranch.

It is likely he lives close by here.

You know he was once engaged,

Or as good as engaged, to Alice.

HARRY. Miss Alwell?

BETSY. Yes. He was poor.

Her father broke off the engagement;

He came out west. We had heard

Of another attachment; and look—

His brand new wife, I suppose.

(*Starting forward.*)

I am going to meet her.

HARRY. Wait!—

Let us think, a moment, of Alice.

If the three were to come together,

And a spark of the old love lived,

Who knows?—It might start a fire—

BETSY. Of blushes, I see. What a joke!

HARRY. (*Surprised and troubled.*)

You think lost love is a joke?

(*To himself as he turns to one side.*)

We laugh at it, yes, I know.
And so does the devil—about
The only thing that he laughs at.
And a deal of fun, there is, too,
For him on the earth, I suppose.

BETSY. What is that?

HARRY. I was thinking—

BETSY. Of me?

HARRY. (*Surprised, yet significantly.*)

Perhaps. We were talking of Alice.

BETSY. You think more of Alice than me?

HARRY. I think more of her than of them.

(*Pointing toward WINNIE and LORN.*)

You deem it best they should meet?

BETSY. If not, they will have to.

HARRY. Humph, humph!

BETSY. (*Advancing toward LORN and WINNIE from the left.*)

Why, why, Mr. Lorn, as I think.

LORN.—Miss Blinder!—and what brought you here?

BETSY. Just came from New York on a visit.

You know my uncle, perhaps,
Thomas Gall, whose ranch is close by.

LORN. Delighted to welcome you, too!

Here, Winnie, Miss Blinder—an old
Acquaintance of mine.

(*WINNIE rises and exchanges bows with BETSY.*)

BETSY. So happy!

(*Introducing MERRIMAN.*)

My friend, Mr. Merriman.

(*LORN and HARRY shake hands.*)

LORN. (*To HARRY.*)

Strangers

Are welcome to Texas.

HARRY. Am pleased

To meet you.

(*Exchanging bows with WINNIE.*)

And you, Mrs. Lorn.

(*HARRY, LORN and BETSY talk to one another.*)

WINNIE. (*Aside.*)

Humph! Misses!—but all his own fault.

And men never take off their coats

And sit down in the sleeves of their souls

With a woman unless she is married.—

I may see him without his coating.

LORN. (*To BETSY.*)

So, so! Thomas Gall is your uncle!

Then we shall be neighbors, yes, yes;

Only twenty-five miles apart.—

Can show you out here both ranches

(*Pointing toward Right First Entrance.*)

Exit—Right First—GALL and BETSY.

(WINNIE resumes her seat. HARRY takes the seat left by LORN.)

HARRY. Only twenty-five miles apart.—

Are very near neighbors of yours.

WINNIE. And yet I have heard of neighbors

One wished to have further away.

HARRY. I suppose that you like it out here.

WINNIE. As far as I know it, I do.

HARRY. Not lived here long?

WINNIE. No—in Boston.

HARRY. In Boston?

WINNIE. In Cambridge.

HARRY. In Cambridge?

WINNIE. In Cambridge.

HARRY. Three times and out.

You have it.

WINNIE. Am dreadfully sorry.

The experienced traveler now,

In writing home, I suppose,

Will be forced to draw on his fancy

To paint his graphic encounter

With the wild, rude, horrible ranch girl.

HARRY. The means of his observation

Were limited—saw through a veil

Very darkly.

WINNIE. Afraid of the sun.

HARRY. My father's?

WINNIE. Oh, yes;—so bright!

You, too, know Cambridge, perhaps.

HARRY. When I was a student at Harvard,

I used to know Boston; but Cambridge—

Well, Cambridge I sometimes would cut.

WINNIE. That is strange.

HARRY. What cutting it?

WINNIE. No;

But I think I have seen you before.

HARRY. I wonder if I have seen you.

You have an advantage—that veil—

WINNIE. I think it was on the first base.

HARRY. You are right. You saw me?

WINNIE. And heard you.

HARRY. Humph! Somebody must have done well!

If I yelled so loud that you heard me?

WINNIE. Why, yes, if I heard the club.

HARRY. The club!—That is good—when it made A hit at the ball.

WINNIE. It was not

At the ball that I heard it sing

HARRY. But how could a ball-club sing Except—

WINNIE. But *I* mean the glee club.

HARRY. First bass on the glee club! Humph! humph!

The only bass bawling of mine

Was on the bass-ball-nine. There *was*

A Merryman, though, on the glee club.

But he was much darker than I.

If you lifted your veil, you might see it.

WINNIE. Have no curiosity, thank you.

I heard you, perhaps, at Commencement.

HARRY. Still wrong! None heard me speak there.

Not a man of such standing, you see;

But of understanding, looked out

For my bass, and the ball at my feet

Put my whole *sole* into my work.

WINNIE. And played the wag?

HARRY. Oh, yes;

And where a wag was in place—

At the tail of the class.

WINNIE. You got

One part of the training.

HARRY. I did,—

Got *set on*. Yes

WINNIE. I mean

You learned to live by your wits.

HARRY. But that is the right of the woman.

WINNIE. What?—not to live by her work?

HARRY. Oh, no; but to work by her wits.

WINNIE.—But, honestly, now, you know

That we work as much as the men?

HARRY. Why “honestly”?

WINNIE. Why do you ask?

HARRY. Because in a world of donkeys,

All trying to hide their ears

In a lion's hide that hides nothing,
How can one be wholly honest
Yet wholly polite? You see
Dishonesty is to politeness
What Latin is to a doctor,
Or pedantry is to a teacher,
Or lace to a last year's ball dress.
We all see through it; and yet
We all say nothing about it.
WINNIE. And you really think we women
Work less than the men. I should like
To set you at housekeeping.

HARRY. Madam,
There are women that I would give all
I am worth to have set me at that.

WINNIE. Your hands could not stand it.

HARRY. Oh, yes;
My hands could stand a good deal;
Why I could stand on them myself—
Are plenty large. Did you lift
Your veil, you could see them more clearly.
(*He thrusts his hands toward her, as both are
sitting. She takes them in hers and looks at
them intently.*)

And what are you trying to find?—
The marks of toil, or of soil?

WINNIE. Of character. Surely you know
Your hand is your fortune?

HARRY. Is it?—
You say that to me as a man.
But the face is the woman's fortune.
Not fair I should give you mine;
And you not give me yours.

(*Moving his head as if to peek through her
veil; Winnie looks at his hands.*)

Enter—Right Upper—BETSY and ALICE.

BETSY. (*Advancing, and speaking to ALICE.*)

Why, what in the world are they doing?

HARRY. (*Looking up at BETSY.*)

I am giving my hand to her, Betsy.

And she is to get my fortune.

BETSY. Your fortune?

HARRY. I said so. Perhaps

She will tend to yours first. Sit down.

(*Rising, and offering his seat to BETSY, who
draws back.*)

Oh, now! We are not at a game,

To be lost by showing your hand.

BETSY. (*Turning to ALICE.*)

It is perfectly shocking.

(HARRY reseats himself. WINNIE looks at his hands.)

ALICE. (*To BETSY, as both move toward Left First Entrance.*)

What is it?

BETSY. (*Pointing toward WINNIE.*)

That woman was holding his hand.

ALICE. Whose?—Harry's?—Absurd!—You know it.

It was only one more of his jokes.

BETSY. And you know that I, Alice Alwell,

Was never brought up in that way.

ALICE. In what way?

BETSY. (*Pointing toward WINNIE.*)

In that way, Alice.

And I shall have nothing to do

With a woman like that.

ALICE. Who is she?

BETSY. Who is she?—Why Layton Lorn's wife.

ALICE. (*Greatly agitated.*)

His wife?—and Layton's?

BETSY. These men—

You never know what they will do.

Some half-gypsy girl, I suppose

He has picked up out here on the ranch.

ALICE. (*To herself.*)

His wife?—and my only reason

For coming out here was to meet him?

Enter—Right First—LORN.

And there—yes, yes—it is he.

If this be the truth?—but courage!

LORN. (*Advancing eagerly to shake hands with her.*)

Why, Alice, are you out here too.

I can hardly believe my own eyes.

Why this!—it is like old times.

(ALICE takes his hand and bows stiffly.)

(LORN looks down at his attire, as if suspecting this to be the reason of her stiffness.)

Yes, yes. I do appear rough,

But a few years more of this,

And I shall go back independent.

Enter hurriedly—Right Second—GALL.

GALL. (*To ALICE and BETSY.*)

Our lunch is all ready, at last.

(*To LORN, shaking hands.*)

Good day, Mr. Lorn, will you join us?

If not, you will have to excuse them.

LORN. Yes, yes, but on the condition

That all of you soon visit us.

GALL. Oh, certainly!—soon as they wish it.

LORN. (*Shaking hands with BETSY and then with ALICE.*)

Good day, then; and make it to-morrow.

ALICE. (*To LORN.*)

Are you living alone out here?

LORN. I have been, but now I have her,

(*Pointing to WINNIE.*)

So lovely!—I want you to know her.

(*As ALICE shrinks back looking toward the hotel.*)

Of course, not now, if no time.

But I hope you will bear in mind

That, however things may have changed,

We should never forget each other.

(*LORN turns toward HARRY and WINNIE, who rise from their seats.*)

BETSY. (*To ALICE, for whom she has been waiting.*)

He said you should never forget;

And a married man, too!

ALICE. Sh!—sh!—

Exeunt—Right Second—ALICE and BETSY.

LORN. (*To HARRY and WINNIE.*)

You two appear to be friends.

(*To HARRY.*)

You must come and see us. Come often.

I have to go off at times,

For half of the day, and more;

And Winnie will feel it a godsend

For some one to make things lively.

If riding out on the ranch,

Come over just as you are.

We are free and easy out here.

HARRY. (*Shaking hands with WINNIE and LORN.*)

Oh, thank you. Be sure that I will.

(*To himself, as he turns toward Right Second Entrance.*)

Should think they *were* free and easy.

Divorce mills are handy here, yes.

Exit—Right Second—HARRY.

WINNIE. (*Excitedly taking her veil down.*)

But, why did you urge him so
To come to the ranch to see me?
A perfect stranger, like that!

LORN. Oh, no; not a perfect stranger.

I have known all about him for years;
And a fine fellow too. You will like him.

WINNIE. Did you hear what he called me?

LORN. What?

WINNIE. (*Laughing.*)

Not Miss, but Misses.

LORN. He did?

I wonder if that could have been
The trouble with Alice Alwell?

You told him, of course, his mistake?

WINNIE. Not I.

LORN. Why not?

WINNIE. Do you know,

He is just the most charming man
That I ever met in my life.

LORN. You think that answers my question?—

It sounds like a woman's reason.

WINNIE. Perhaps; and perhaps it is.

CURTAIN.

ACT SECOND.

SCENE.—*The interior of Ranch House. Backing, at Right Center, is a window. Between the place of Right Center and of Right Third Entrance, are two pegs, on one of which hangs a large overcoat, to be worn by LORN. Near the place of Right Third Entrance, are shelves on which, in connection with other things readily suggesting themselves, are a large tin wash-pan and two other tin-pans, and a dish containing a large quantity of rice. On the floor, in front of these shelves is a slop-pail also a bucket full of water in which bucket is a tin-dipper. Backing, at Left Center is a table surmounted by a closed closet never opened. In the table is a drawer containing two belts. One of them can be fastened around the waist of LORN and the other around that of WINNIE. In each belt are two pistols. Those in the belt of WINNIE can be easily taken from it. Between the place of the Left Upper Entrance and the Left Third Entrance is a washstand with bowl and pitcher. Above the washstand is a mirror, and beside the mirror hangs a towel, evidently intended for the hands and face. Near the place of Left Third Entrance, is a small table on which is a wet dishcloth and a holder to be used in lifting the tea-kettle. Near the place of Left Front Entrance, is a cooking-stove; and on it is a tea-kettle. Beside the stove, near the middle of the stage, are two chairs. Behind them, in the middle of the stage, is a table spread with a white cloth, on which are unwashed dishes left from a meal—plates, tumblers, etc. Entrances by doors at Right Second Entrance, and Left Upper Entrance. A door, never opened is at Left Second Entrance.*

Enter—Right Second—LORN.

(He hangs his hat on the peg near the door, sits in a chair near the stove, and prepares to smoke.)

LORN. How kind it has been in Winnie
 To bring me some of her sunshine!
 I am more than ever afraid, though,
 She will find the ship of her hope
 Is beached out here on a sand-bank.
 I feel so myself without Alice.
 Well, well, I thought I had learned
 To control and suppress my feelings.
 But the other day when I met her,
 The touch of her hand, as of old,
 Set all my nerves in a quiver,
 As if I were a bundle of wires
 And she the electric motor.
 No wonder they say that life
 Is electric. I know with me,
 When my nerves go thrilling like that,
 No other life seems worth having.

*Enter—Right Second—WINNIE in mountain dress
 and hat, which latter she removes and takes
 seat in chair near Left Center.*

But here comes Winnie again.
 If a nature so sympathetic
 Were once to see my thoughts
 Through the veil of my loneliness, Humph!
 She would wear the same veil herself.

(*To WINNIE.*)

Well, Winnie, I hope that you find it
 Not wholly stupid out here.

WINNIE. I scarcely ever enjoyed
 Myself so much in my life.
 Every atom of air is as keen
 And as bright as a dart of a Cupid
 To tingle one's blood to a glow
 And make one in love with all things.
 And we have so much to see!

LORN. You have enterprise, Winnie. The most
 Of the people out here have to hunt
 As much for a thing to see
 As they do for a thing to eat.

WINNIE. They do?—with the sheep and the cat-
 tle
 That keep up their going and coming;
 And clouds of grasshoppers flying,
 And coyotes and partridges darting
 Up out of the rocks and the grasses,
 And rattlesnakes turning to life
 The very sticks at your feet!

The most enlivening place
I ever set foot in, Laytie!
I have just had a ride with Foodle.
We went over here three miles
To visit a prairie-dog-town
We found such a lovely valley;
And, at last, we spied three owls.
At first I thought they were bird's nests,
Bushed up on a dead tree's branches;
But Foodle called them watchmen—
Night watchmen, you know, of the dog-town.
I wonder whether they guard
The dogs the most, or haunt them.
Well, then, as we passed the owls,
We pounced, full drive, on the town.
The dogs were sunning themselves
On the tops of their little mounds.
When Foodle drove in among them,
You ought to have seen them dodging
And darting down to their holes.
It seemed to me just like charging
Through hills of elephant ants.
You do everything here out west
On a very big scale.

*Enter—Right Second—FOODLE with slouch hat,
red shirt and pants stuck in his boots.*

LORN. (*To FOODLE.*)

Well, Foodle,

I am glad you are taking such care
Of my sister. She says, thanks to you,
She is having a very good time.

FOODLE. Exactly the thing as I likes.

But there boys be a-come outside
As wants to see yer right off.

LORN. Is it so? I will go to them then.

Exit—Right Second—LORN and FOODLE.

WINNIE (*to herself as she fills the time needed
for LORN's absence by moving around the room,
and arranging and placing plates on table.*)

Ugh, ugh! no need to tell Laytie
About that rattlesnake, ugh!

Why, it seemed as if it had dropped
Down out of my very dress.

And they say they slip into houses.

Ugh, ugh! Why, mice would be nothing.

You have only to shake at them so.

(*Shaking skirts.*)

But snakes.—No wonder that Eve
Ate the apple at bid of a snake!
I think that I might have eaten
A peck of them, seeds and all.

Enter—Right Second—LORN.

LORN. (*Moving about the room, evidently preparing to go away.*)

Bad news for you, Winnie. A band
Of Mexicans, twelve miles south,
Have made a raid on our ranch,
And driven off one of our herds.

WINNIE. (*Alarmed.*)

And will they come here, and attack us?

LORN. No; anywhere else but here.

A man who fights with thieves
Has justice to fight beside him.
They show their backs to the one
And they dare not face the other.
What I wanted to say is this:
That I must be off to find them.

WINNIE. (*More alarmed.*)

But, Laytie, they might kill you.

LORN. (*Changing his boots for riding boots.*)

There is not the least fear of that.
We have many more men than they.
They are all, too, a set of cowards.

To take aim they would have to face us.

WINNIE. But when shall I see you again?

To-night, do you think—for supper?

LORN. Oh, no; not so soon—I fear.

I may not be back till to-morrow.

WINNIE. You are going to leave me alone?

LORN. Yes, that was my bad news, Winnie.

You, see, this may be a question
Of thousands of dollars for me.
If thieves were no more than rats,
You would have to begin by fighting;
Or else be run over completely.

WINNIE. And I must stay here?

LORN. (*Putting on his overcoat.*) Of course.

(*Then, seeing WINNIE'S anxiety.*)

There is nothing to fear for, Winnie;
But only you may feel lonely.

WINNIE. Yet Foodle will stay?

LORN. Oh, yes;

And the boys—all those not with me.

They are sure to protect you, Winnie.
You must keep them, though, from the spirits.

*(Placing his hand on the closed closet backing
at Left Center.)*

If not, our whiskey here
Might play the devil inside them.
So you must be careful, Winnie,
To keep the closet well locked.

(Giving her a key and then another.)

I will give you this other key too—

*(Drawing out the drawer in the table backing
at Left Center, and taking from it pistols at-
tached to a belt.)*

If Foodle should want you to leave here—
There is no better guide, you know—
You take out these, and wear them.

WINNIE. *(Drawing back.)*

I—take?—but they might go off.

LORN. But not without you, I hope.

If you go, do not leave them behind;
Or some one else might get them
(Noticing Winnie's agitation.)

But you poor little thing, you are trembling!
Perhaps, I ought not to go.
Humph! What are a few thousand dollars
Compared to you! I will not.

WINNIE. No, Laytie, you must. I came here
To help you. Of course, at first,
You startled me; but I would rather,
A thousand times, have you go
Than not. And if I be trembling,
It is more than half, because
It thrills me to think of what
I can do for you—yes—so go.

LORN. *(Putting on one of the brace of pistols,
leaving another in the drawer, and giving the
key of the drawer to WINNIE. A horse is
heard galloping up to the door.)*

A glorious girl you are, Winnie.
And, really I ought to go.
And the danger is only a myth—
Good bye, take care of yourself;
And do not be anxious now, promise.

Exit—Right Second—LORN, after bidding WINNIE good bye.

WINNIE. (*Following him to the door and filling in the time by watching him till the horse is heard galloping away, then she walks about the room.*)

It is dreadful, to stay here alone,
Alone with those horrible drunkards,
And the raiding thieves so near!
And only that half-dog Foodle
To take care of me, if there be danger.
I wonder how far it is
To the nearest ranch, and the way there.
I will find out from Foodle.—Here, Foodle.

(*Calling to Foodle from the doorway at Right Second Entrance.*)

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE.

I want you to tell me, Foodle,
How near is the nearest ranch.

FOODLE. Oh, a matter of twenty-five mile.

WINNIE. You mean the nearest large ranch.

But I mean that small one nearer,
The one that I saw—

FOODLE. Oh, that—

But *they* don't amount to nothin'

WINNIE. But whose house is it? Who live there?

FOODLE. (*Superciliously.*)

Why, didn't I tell you once?

A couple o' green young chaps.

WINNIE. They are men from the north, not so?

FOODLE. Them green kind usually is.

WINNIE. (*Aside.*)

They are northerners.—Thanks for that!

(*To FOODLE.*)

How far is their house from here?

FOODLE. Ten mile, perhaps.

WINNIE. Now, Foodle,

You know I am left in your care.

FOODLE. Yes, the boss was tellin' me how
I must keep an eye on you.

WINNIE. Was he?

(*Aside.*)

You expect to be master, eh?

I must keep an eye on *you*.

(*To FOODLE.*)

- Now Foodle, you know it might happen,
When you were away from here,
Or something of that sort, you know—
- FOODLE. But I ain't a-goin' away.
- WINNIE. No, of course not, Foodle, of course.
But something or other might happen;
And I might need to know
Just how to get to that house.
- FOODLE. That house where the young chaps is?
- WINNIE. Yes, that.
- FOODLE. (*Aside.*) She's afeard o' me, oh, yes.
And I is a feard o' the young chaps.
(*To WINNIE.*)
So you wants to know how to reach 'em?
- WINNIE. If something should happen, you see.
- FOODLE. Oh, yes, if somethin' should happen.
- WINNIE. You can tell me, of course.
- FOODLE. Oh, yes;
You first goes down to the creek;
And then you goes on across it.
But before that you follers a path;
And you's got to be mighty careful
Not to foller the other path there.
- WINNIE. (*Taking out her note book and writing.*)
Quite a number of other paths there?
- FOODLE. Why, of course, there be; for you see
This land is a free one for sheep;
And wherever one sheep goes a-bleatin'
A thousand goes follerin' after.
And most of them goes single-file—
Well, after you crosses the creek,
You foller another path up;
And when you gets half-way through it,
You turn—
- WINNIE. But how can one tell
When half-way through it?
- FOODLE. You comes
To the place where you turn.
- WINNIE. Oh, the whole—
The whole path turns there.
- FOODLE. No—
The path to where the young chaps is.
- WINNIE. Does it turn to the right or the left?
- FOODLE. There ain't but one way to turn
When you gets to the right place. Then,
When you pegs on a half-mile further,

You goes to the top of a hill,
Then a little way down toward a valley;
And then you comes to a tree.

WINNIE. The only tree in the valley?

FOODLE. Oh, no; why, it's full o' trees.

It's the tree that you tells the path by.

(WINNIE *shakes her head disparingly.*)

And when you's once in the path,

You goes on till you comes to a sheep-pen.

WINNIE. And how far is the sheep-pen?

FOODLE. From here?

WINNIE. Yes, from here.

FOODLE. Oh, three or four mile.

WINNIE. Not more than half of the way?

Why, Foodle, I never could find

The whole way.

FOODLE. You couldn't? You couldn't?

(*Pointing to Winnie's note book.*)

Not even by chalking it down?

WINNIE. And then, I might be obliged

To go there, too, in the night.

FOODLE. (*With shrewd sham-sympathy.*)

And you couldn't do that now, could you?

Oh, no; I's a-feard you couldn't!

(*Sounds of disputing voices heard outside.*)

WINNIE. (*In alarm.*)

Why, what can all that be about?

Go and see, please; and come and tell me.

Exit—Right Second—FOODLE.

(WINNIE *fills in the time by rushing to the window, backing at Right Center, and stretching out, and, apparently, studying what she sees.*)

Are they trying to kill that man?—

As I live!—it can't be—it is

That young Mr. Merriman, yes,

That I met at the railway station.

But where in the world did he come from?

And how he is fighting them!—Why—

That rope!—Are they trying to tie him?

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE.

(*To FOODLE.*)

And what is it, Foodle, quick!

FOODLE. They are only havin' some fun.

WINNIE. Some fun?—What kind of fun?

FOODLE. Why stringin' a feller up.

WINNIE. Stringing up?—What is that?

FOODLE.
Call hangin'. What you folks

WINNIE. What?—murder, you mean?

FOODLE. But it's allers done out here.

WINNIE. (*In great alarm.*)

Done always?

FOODLE. To them kind o' fellers,
Of course.

WINNIE. To what kind of fellows?

FOODLE. The kind as they allers hangs.

WINNIE. To what kind?—What has he done?

FOODLE. You seem to be gettin' impatient.

(WINNIE moves toward Right Second Entrance
as if to go to the men.)

If you goes out there, they'll hang 'im

As soon as they sees yer a-comin'.

WINNIE. Oh, dear, they will have him hung
Before my eyes; and nothing
That I can do can prevent it!

(To FOODLE.)

Unless you answer me plainly,

I will have my brother discharge you.

FOODLE. Why don't you know what fellers
They allers hangs, out here?

WINNIE. Of course, I don't. Now tell me.

FOODLE. Why, the fellers as steals our hosses;

And when they is catched in the act—

WINNIE. This man has been stealing no horses.
You mistake. I know him myself.

FOODLE. Oh, so! You know him, do you?

And it's one o' them northern chaps
From the house you was talkin' about.

WINNIE. (*To herself.*)

This man will drive me insane!

There must be some sort of feud

Between that ranch and this.

(T_0 FOODLE.)

No, no; he is not one of them.

Go tell the men that I know him;

And I know he is not a horse-thief.

FOODLE. What, tell 'em their own eyes lied?—

They would tell you as your'n had lied.

(*Aside.*)

That's the chap I's to keep my eyes on.

WINNIE. (*Aside.*)

Can he be jealous, I wonder?

If they think, whatever I say,
I am lying, to save him, I *will* lie.
(*To FOODLE.*)

You misunderstood me, Foodle.
I did not mean that I knew him.
But my brother knows him, Foodle.
He spoke to him at the junction.
And I know he is not a thief,
Because he is rich, very rich.
And, Foodle, you tell the boys
That if *they* let him off, at least,
My brother and I will not,
Till all of them have been given
A mint of his money, Foodle.

FOODLE. Oh, ho! It is that you wanted!

I see. It might make a bargain;
And your brother's knowin' 'im so!

Exit—Right Center—FOODLE.

WINNIE. (*To herself.*)

Where we all are creatures of dust,
Thank God for gold-dust. Its gleam
Can sometimes hypnotize brains
As plain, clear thought never could.
Hang him? (*She fills in the time by trying to
look through the window backing at Right
Center. Then rushes toward the drawer in
the table, backing at Left Center.*)

Here's the key!

(*Taking the key from her pocket she opens the
drawer, takes out the pistols and examines
them.*)

All loaded!

Twelve shots, and only nine men.

(*Puts the belt containing the pistols around
her, but under her apron, so that it can not
be seen.*)

Let them dare to attempt to hang him!

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE.

(*She continues to FOODLE.*)

Well, what do they say?

FOODLE. They would like
To accommodate you, but the trouble
Just now is about his shearin'.

WINNIE. His shearing?

FOODLE. Oh, you would say strippin'!
He's got on a good coat o' wool.

WINNIE. You mean that he wears good clothes—
Is a dude—of course.

FOODLE. Of course;
And the boys hates dudes. Besides,
Old Muggins, as cotched that hoss,
Is as dead-set on sportin' them clothes,
As a sixteen-year-old gal
On sweepin' the dust with her tail.
And it's allers the rule out here
That the man, as catches a thief,
Is boss of his hide, you know.

WINNIE. Very well, if he wants the man's
clothes,

Why not let him have them?

FOODLE. Why not?—
Why what would a dude be good for,
As handn't no clothes?

WINNIE. (*Laughing.*) I see.

We might give him others, you know.

FOODLE. Not much. There's none on the ranch.

WINNIE. (*Going to door at Left Second Entrance, but finding it locked.*)

But, my brother—Oh, dear; it is locked!

FOODLE. There ain't nothin' for him in there.

You disremember, I guess

The time we went off to the station.

We took all the clothes on the ranch

To the tailor, as comes there to fix things.

WINNIE. You took them all to the tailor?

FOODLE. We took every rag.

WINNIE. Then all.

This man can change with Muggins.

FOODLE. With Muggins?—He wants the dude's
clothes

To work in, you think? Not he!

You see you can't blame the boys.

They're used to this kind o' sport.

And all of 'em knows that the best

Of a bundle like this is the wrappin'.

And when they've got that, all that's left

Is the string, and where there's a string,

They're spilin' to hang somethin' with it—

WINNIE. You must not talk that way, Foodle.

FOODLE. Well I should like to know how,

With you on the ranch and the boys,

I's a-goin' to keep things decent,

When Muggins has got all his clothes,

And the man is not under ground?

WINNIE. (*Throwing herself into a chair and laughing.*)

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

FOODLE. (*To himself, as he looks at her.*)

Well, now, that gal's a-gone off!

My old boss's wife used to have 'em.

He called 'em the histrionics.

But she never went off very far.

Too bad, but she never quite died!

WINNIE. Oh, I've the most comical notion!—

To think of it, makes me ache.

The thing that we want here, Foodle,

The thing that we want, is a girl,

A girl to do housekeeping for us.

Suppose that we make one of him—

First, empty his clothes for Muggins;

And then squeeze himself, you know,

Inside of that queer old rig

That the last girl left here.—You wait.—

I will go and get it.

*Exit—Left Upper—*WINNIE.

FOODLE. Ho, ho!

The boys 'll catch on to that!

The devil himself would save

A man he could still keep a-fryin'.

Their kickin' show'll be a sight better

With the dude in a petticoat! Ha!

*Enter—Left Upper—*WINNIE *with a bundle of clothes.*

WINNIE. Here, Foodle, you take these out,

And tell me, at once, what they do.

(*She pushes him toward Right Second Entrance.*)

*Exit—Right Second—*FOODLE.

WINNIE. (*Filling in time by gazing out of the window at Right Center.*)

No, no; they are out of sight.

But, perhaps, it is just as well!

(*Turning away from the window, taking a pistol from her belt and examining it, then turning to window again.*)

I ought to have seen them myself.

The men who oppose a man

Will sometimes yield to a woman.

The toughest of them can be wounded,

Like crocodiles, through the eye.

This gives almost any young woman
A chance, where a man would fail.
If Foodle fails, I will try them.

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE.

Well, Foodle.

FOODLE. All right.

WINNIE. You are sure?

FOODLE. That didn't need no explanation—

Caught on right off! They will change him.
Goin' back to look at the fun.

WINNIE. When his skirts are on him, Foodle,
You bring him in here to me.

And, Foodle, you make him believe
That I think him a girl,—and, Foodle,
You would better not call me Miss Lorn;
And you tell the boys not to do it.

By my face, the man does not know me.
But he might by my name, and the more
He thinks we are strangers, the more
Real sport he can give us.

FOODLE. Yes, yes.

Exit—Right Second—FOODLE.

WINNIE. (*Filling in time by rushing toward the window at Right Center, then modestly hesitating, shrugging her shoulders, shaking her head, and turning to examine herself in the mirror.*)

I hardly believe he will know me.
That day I was wearing my veil;
And my voice, I think, was hoarse.
He has probably lost his way;
And, of course, would not know our ranch;
Would scarcely learn of it here.
And yet he might. If he do—
(*Shrugs her shoulders.*)

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE, followed by HARRY in a maid's dress too small for him, reaching not quite to the ankles. The RANCHMEN crowd behind making fun of him.

FOODLE. If you please, Miss, here's the new maid.

WINNIE. Well, well, as we needed a woman,
I suppose we can let her live.

(*Addressing HARRY, but evidently trying to impress the RANCHMEN.*)

But I want you to understand
That I am the mistress here.

(She lifts her apron, and reveals the pistols, at which RANCHMEN appear surprised. WINNIE continues aside.)

Astonishing how much courage
The presence of this man gives me!

(Takes a pistol in her hand, and waves it about, saying to the RANCHMEN, as she gestures toward Right Second Entrance.)

Now, boys, you have had your fun.
It is time to return to your work.
And, Foodle, you may go with them.
But be sure to wait close at hand,
And be ready to come, if I call.

(Both the RANCHMEN and FOODLE seem to demur at this; but after a little Exeunt—Right Second—RANCHMEN, followed slowly and reluctantly by FOODLE.)

HARRY. *(Who has been regarding her carefully, and evidently suspects who she is, to himself.)*
I wish I had had those pistols;
Or had not left mine behind me.—
But no; I should not have been here.
(To WINNIE.)

I have heard of arms before
Round a woman's waist; but, bless me,
If ever I dreamed—

WINNIE. Be silent.
I have saved your life—have a right
To your gratitude.

HARRY. Have you? Boo hoo!

(Shivering.)

WINNIE. *(In solicitude.)*

You are shivering then? Are you cold?

HARRY. *(Looking at his exposed arms and ankles.)*

Am not used to being exposed—

Am bashful. It makes me tremble.

WINNIE. When the child of our brain gives us
trouble,

We must send him out into service.

(Puts a large washpan on the table, at center of stage, and puts soiled dishes in it.)

HARRY. You mean if people be lazy
They forget themselves the most,
When they seem surrounded by work.

WINNIE. (*Pointing to the washpan and the dishes.*)

Here, now, you can clean these dishes.

I suppose you are used to it, eh?

HARRY. Oh, yes; whenever I eat,
I always clean the dishes.

WINNIE. Well, go then, and get the water.

(*Points to pail with water and dipper near the place of Left Third Entrance. Harry begins to walk rapidly to and fro, carrying water in the dipper from the pail to the dish.*)

WINNIE. (*Laughing, as she watches him.*)

Do you think that I want you to train
For a walking-match?—

HARRY.

Why—

WINNIE.

Then why—

Not bring the whole pail at once?

HARRY. What then is the need of the dipper?

(*He rushes for the pail, brings it to the front of the table and sets it on the floor so violently that it splashes over.*)

WINNIE. See how you have spilled it; look!

(*Harry lifts the pail to pour from it into the pan.*)

Not that way. See how it drips.

You must use the dipper now.

HARRY. (*Putting down the pail, and taking the dipper, and flourishing it.*)

A sort of Indian club

For the arms—but not for the legs.

WINNIE. And not for a sprinkler, either!—

You take it for holy water,

And this for a church?

HARRY. (*Bowing down, as he puts the dipper in the pail.*)

Why not?—

My service is just beginning.

(*He lifts the dipper, pouring the water into the pan that is on the table.*)

WINNIE. Wait, wait!—It will all be cold.

You must get the hot water now

From the kettle there.

(Pointing toward the stove. HARRY rushes to it, and takes the kettle by its handle, then drops it, and dances about blowing his fingers.)

Come, come!

No place for dancing here!

But for serious work.

HARRY. Yes, yes.

I should think so—*seared* my fingers.

They are looking like autumn leaves.

WINNIE. Oh, burned your fingers, have you?—

You ought to have used the holder.

(Handing him the holder from the table near the place of Left Second Entrance.)

HARRY. Ah, that way! Yes, I see.

So, so; that is easy enough.

(He takes the tea-kettle to the table, and pours the hot water into the wash-pan, but awkwardly, letting the kettle swing round and burn the hand that is holding it.)

WINNIE. It is?

HARRY. No, no! it is fearful!

(Suddenly placing the kettle on the white table cloth, and burning it.)

WINNIE. *(Snatching up the kettle without using the holder, and pointing to the table-cloth.)*

You are right. I should think it was!—

You have ruined it now forever.

(She pours the water from the kettle into the wash-pan. While she is doing this, HARRY notices that he still holds the holder. He offers it to her. She shakes her head refusing it, then feels the water in the wash-pan.)

Just warm enough, I think!

(She replaces the kettle on the stove.)

HARRY. *(Looking at the holder in his hand, then at her; then cautiously feeling the water in the wash-pan, and suddenly drawing his hand back.)*

Are you a salamander?

WINNIE. *(Looking around from the stove, shaking her head and laughing.)*

No; you are a goosy-gander.

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE.

FOODLE. Some strangers out here, Miss Lorn.

They says as they wants to see you.

Exeunt—Right Second—WINNIE and FOODLE.

HARRY. (*To himself.*)

Ah, that was a Miss that I

Did not miss. Humph, humph!—I seem

(*Several times, as if experimenting puts hand in water and draws it out suddenly.*)

To be getting into hot-water.

Our game of hide and seek

May turn to a game of tag.

Enter—Right Second—WINNIE followed by SINGERS and FOODLE.

Exit—Left Upper—FOODLE.

WINNIE. I have found a traveling band

Of singers outside. They are going

To give me a song for their dinner.

SINGERS SING:

Chorus:

Ah, boys, when we fill our glasses,

We may drink to whatever else passes,

But whenever we quaff to life's better half,

We must always drink to the lasses.

(*During the chorus, and the following interlude, HARRY begins to dance. The SINGERS call one another's attention to him, almost recognize him to be a man; and start out to join in his fun by dancing with him.*)

SINGER. You may journey to Nice or to Paris

For a cough that a song may embarrass;

But the air of the West is the freshest and best;

And the sweetest, the air of its heiress.

Chorus: The sweetest the air of its heiress;

Ah, boys, when we fill our glases, etc.

(*While dancing, HARRY slaps one of the SINGERS on the shoulder, or puts his arm around him. The SINGER sings the next stanza.*)

SINGER. There was a lone man on a May-day,

He came to the wilds of a hey-day;

But when he got there, instead of a bear,

He found himself hugged by a la-dy.

Chorus: He found himself hugged by a la-dy.

Ah, boys, when we fill our glasses, etc.

HARRY. There was a young man that I know,

Who cried for a "Westward Ho."

Because his yeast he had left in the east,

And he wanted a po-ta-to.

Chorus: He wanted a po-ta-to.

Ah, boys, when we fill our glasses, etc.

(Other verses suited to the times may be introduced.)

Enter—Left Upper—FOODLE.

FOODLE. *(To WINNIE.)* They can wash up now, if they wants to.

(WINNIE leads the SINGERS to the door at Left Upper Entrance. HARRY takes the hand-towel hanging near the Left Upper Entrance, and, shrinking from the heat of the water, draws a plate from the wash-pan, rubs the plate, looks at it, and makes motions of writing on it with his finger.)

Exit—Right Second—FOODLE.

Exeunt—Left Upper—The SINGERS.

WINNIE. *(Coming toward HARRY.)* And what is the matter now?

HARRY. I was thinking about this plate.

One *thinks* when he writes, does he not?

WINNIE. Some write because their thoughts

Are running out of their brain.

HARRY. *(Showing her the grease-lines on the plate.)*

But look—It is very strange!

WINNIE. Oh, no; it is very common!

HARRY.—In a climate like this, I suppose,

So many things sweat.—

WINNIE. Better say

There are so many things that are lazy.

(Pointing to plate.)

It has not been half rubbed yet.

HARRY. *(Looking incredulous, then feeling the muscles of his arm.)*

Well, I would rather—

WINNIE. Be hung?—

Why, what is this that you have?—

The hand-towel, as I live!

(Taking from him the towel that he has been using, then giving it back to him and pointing to a slop-pail on the floor.)

Come here wring it out over this.

(HARRY tries awkwardly to wring it.)

You awkward! Wring it in this way.

(She wrings it, and hands it back to him.)

HARRY. (Trying to imitate her, but not succeeding.)

In this way, you say?

WINNIE. Tut, tut!

I shall have to do it myself.

Meantime, you can help get ready

The rice for dinner.

(She takes the towel from him, and hanging it where it hung before, points to the dish containing rice which is on the shelf near the place of the Right Third Entrance.)

HARRY. How much?

WINNIE. (Crossing to the other side of the room and arranging something.)

Enough for a dinner for six.

HARRY. Humph, humph! At last I have something

I know how to do. Let me see—

They have few things else to feed on.

Suppose I give each a bowl-full.

(Looks at the rice as if he thought there were very little of it; then pours it all into an empty can and pours water over it.)

WINNIE. (Returning and looking into the pan in which he has put the rice.)

Why, what in the world are you doing?

HARRY. Getting ready the rice.

WINNIE. You think

We feed all the cattle on rice?

HARRY. Why should I?

WINNIE. You think you must boil

All that for only six people?

HARRY. Yes, nevertheless.

WINNIE. If you

Were better acquainted with rice,

You would know how much it could swell.

HARRY. Could swell?—I thought that rice

Was very simple in taste.

I never dreamed of finding

A swell in it—How could I?

(WINNIE puts a pan on another chair, which she draws near the chair on which is the pan filled with rice and water. Then she goes to the closet near the place of Left Third Entrance and takes from it a seive-ladle. While she is doing this, HARRY begins with his hands scooping the rice out of one pan and into the other, all the while spilling water on the floor.)

WINNIE. (*Returning with the seive, and looking at the wet floor.*)

If I am a salamander,

I take it that you are a fish.

You expect me to wade like a crane?

Take this here, and scrub the floor.

(*She flings onto the floor the towel near the Left Upper Entrance. HARRY looks at the towel dubiously. She laughs.*)

I must teach you housekeeping now.

Get down on your knees.

HARRY.

Is that

The way to begin it?

WINNIE. (*Laughing.*) Yes.

HARRY. (*Getting on his knees and looking mockingly at her.*)

I had heard so; and what do you say?

WINNIE. Impertinent!—Have a care!

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE.

(*Sounds of disputing voices are heard.*)

HARRY. (*Rising.*)

I have—but I think for you.

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE.

FOODLE. Them boys is all comin' here, Miss;

And they swear they will get at the liquor.

WINNIE. But, Foodle, they must be stopped.

FOODLE. That is easier said than done.

HARRY. What is it?

WINNIE. (*To HARRY.*)

He says that the boys

Are coming to get at the whiskey.

And my brother, when going away,

Said that this was the one chief thing

That we must prevent their doing.

HARRY. (*Aside.*)

Her brother!—I see—Her brother!

(To WINNIE.)

And where do you keep the whiskey?

WINNIE. (*Pointing to the closet near Left Center.*)

In there, and the keys in my pocket.

(*She shows the keys.*)

HARRY. You keep them, and give me the pistols.

(*He takes the two pistols from her belt.*)

If I had had these before,

Old Muggins might never have caught me.

(*Turning to one side, cocking the pistols, and speaking to himself.*)

Nor I, perhaps, have caught her.

WINNIE. (*Evidently alarmed.*)

Be careful. They might go off.

HARRY. Afraid of them, eh?—then your fright

For me must have been very great,

When you put them on!—I thank you.

(*To himself, at one side, as he examines the pistols.*)

Let them break up our tete-a-tete here,

I never could hit a barn door;

But I guess, by the time we get through,

We shall scatter a lot of darn bores!

Enter—Right Second—RANCHMEN, crowding in rather sheepishly, as if fearing consequences.

HARRY addresses them.

Well, men, and what do you want?

LEADER OF THE MEN. We are comin' here after some grog.

HARRY. And if you return to your quarters,

Perhaps you will get it,—that is

If the lady in charge here will give it.

LEADER. Oh, ho! Well, you ain't no lady.

(*Makes motions as if to go toward the closet at Left Center in front of which stands WINNIE.*)

HARRY. I am not, but she is; and if you

Take one step further, I shoot.

(*He points both pistols at the men. At the same moment*

Enter—Left Upper—THE SINGERS.

(*Seeing what is going on, they pull out pistols and point them at the RANCHMEN.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT THIRD.

SCENE: *The same as in Act Second.*

The curtain rising discloses HARRY dressed as in Act II, in a woman's gown.

HARRY. *(To himself, while arranging certain of the dishes.)*

Were I not engaged to Betsy,
I should say I was falling in love.
But this, of course, can not be,
Any more than if I were married.

(Looking in mirror near place of Left Third Entrance.)

The one thing no man can do,
Is to *outstrip* a woman in dressing.
Not so anxious, perhaps, to be
An angel, and put on airs,
When these drafts that we feel on earth
Have drafted us up to heaven.
No wonder, the women surpass us
In not getting hard or tipsy.
Truth is they are tough by nature,
And get *tight* in ways and stays—
I wonder if squeezing the blood
Keeps it warm. That might explain
Why their arms and necks do not freeze.

(Putting his hand to his waist and breast, then trying to bring the two sides of his dress at the waist together.)

No, no; it is not becoming.
It never will be coming.
But some one else is, I guess.

(Looking toward Left Upper Entrance, and making an awkward pose before the mirror.)

No wonder she always meets me
With a smiling face! The mirror
Is always doing the same.

Enter—Left Upper—WINNIE, who crosses the stage to the window at Right Center.

WINNIE. Out here we can see the sheep
Coming home—a beautiful sight!
(*Pointing out the window.*)
At first you notice they look
Like a low, stone fence on the top
Of the distant hill; and then
Flock on till the whole of the hill
Is gray as a ledge of marble;
But when nearer they look like a wedge.
Last night I rode out on a donkey;
And, when I had met them and turned,
They all ran sweeping behind me,
Like the white and spreading train
Of a long traile'd wedding dress.

HARRY. It is not the first time, my lady,
That a donkey's bridle has led
A wedding train on toward a halter.

WINNIE. (*Laughing.*)
No, no; nor the last, I take it.

(*She seats herself in a chair. HARRY takes a chair and seats himself in front of her, holding out his hand.*)

HARRY. But, Miss Lorn, you never went on
To finish telling my fortune.
I want to know whether I ever
Shall clear my skirts of the charge
That your men—

WINNIE. They are heavy then?

HARRY. What?

WINNIE. The skirts.

HARRY. Oh, no! they are more
Like the charge of a *light* brigade.

(*Gesturing toward his legs, breast and arms, and rising and walking about.*)

I feel like a turkey-gobbler
Hung up in front of a shop,
With neck and wings and legs
All plucked, and what feathers are left,
Bunched up in a tuft at the middle.
It is all like a goblin-dream—
A dream in a German hotel,
With an eiderdown-hub, when one's arms
And legs, raying out toward the frost,
Are kept warm by fervor of speech,

And a wish to get at that German!—
Yet he did not lie by naming
His spread a comfortable!

WINNIE. From what I had heard you say,
I had guessed that you liked to seem
Ridiculous.

HARRY. So I do.
I am so sincere.

WINNIE. So what?

HARRY. Why, what I said—sincere.
The ridiculous is the incongruous.
In society, as we all know,
Sincerity is the incongruous.
You have only to be sincere,
You will seem ridiculous too.

WINNIE. So easy for you as that?

HARRY. Look and see.—The style is the man.
I have only to be sincere;
And if a Methodist parson
Came here on a Sunday, and saw me,
He would laugh on his sacred day
In spite of all of his praying.
I fail myself to see how
Women manage to be—say—graceful,
When their vests pull down so far.
(*Taking hold of his skirts in front.*)

WINNIE. Oh, it comes.

HARRY. (*Taking up a plate, and imitating a waiter.*)

Yes, as “everything comes
For him who *waits*,” I suppose.
When my blushes have heated me through,
I shall take on grace, perhaps,
As a bag-pudding takes on a crust.

WINNIE. (*Laughing.*)

Why, girls more awkward than you
Are made graceful.

HARRY. They are?—By dancing?
(*Making awkward dancing movements.*)

WINNIE. Yes, that and Delsarte.

HARRY. Delsarte?

WINNIE. Yes; moving the hands
And body and arms, so and so.

(*Music of the orchestra, while WINNIE makes
Delsarte gymnastic movements, while Harry
tries awkwardly to imitate her.*)

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE and the SINGERS.

Exit—Right Second—FOODLE.

FIRST SINGER. (*To WINNIE.*)

We find we must be going,

And have come, once more to thank you.

WINNIE. You have paid for it fully, you know.

But if you think not, suppose

You give us one more song

(*SINGERS sing some popular song and chorus.*)

WINNIE. (*Clapping her hands.*) Thanks.

FIRST SINGER. (*Shaking hands with WINNIE and HARRY.*) Good-bye.

OTHER SINGERS. (*Doing the same.*) Good-bye.

WINNIE. (*To SINGERS.*) I hope we shall all meet again.

Exeunt—Right Second—SINGERS.

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE.

FOODLE. Oh, Miss; it is raining just like

A thousand o' bricks—not here

But upon yon hill; and a man

And a couple o' women is comin'

A-drivin' a-down the hill,

Like a boulder rolled by a cyclone—

Will be here in just a minute;

And all wet through to the skin.

WINNIE. Go see to their horses, Foodle;

And bring them in here, of course.

Exit—Right Second—FOODLE.

HARRY. (*In trepidation.*)

Now, tell me, what shall I do?

WINNIE. Behave yourself—like a woman.

HARRY. It was all well enough with the singers;

They were strangers, but these that are coming

Are probably neighbors; and you—

Will it do for you to be found

With me here dressed like this?

WINNIE. You need not expose yourself.

HARRY. (*Looking at his arms and neck.*)

Could I be exposed much more?

WINNIE. (*Laughing.*)

They never would find you out.

But wait, I will get you a wig—

(*Moving toward Left Upper Entrance.*)

Belonged to a comedy outfit;

Been wondering why I brought it.

HARRY. Thought of Indian scalpers, perhaps;

And imagined that you might need it.

Exit—Left Upper—WINNIE.

I only hope it will fit me.

But what if it do, or do not?

These women are coming here;

And if they be all wet through,

The very first order they give

To a servant girl like me

Will be to change their clothes;

And likely enough, besides,

They will order my own clothes off.

Enter—Left Upper—WINNIE bringing wig.

WINNIE. (*Putting the wig on HARRY, and pointing toward mirror.*)

They never would know you now.

HARRY. (*Adjusting the wig.*)

I never should know myself.

(*Speaking falsetto.*)

Shall I speak to them high like this?

WINNIE. (*Laughing.*)

Oh, nonsense! You might, you know.

Forget, and drop your voice.

HARRY. And so reveal the baseness

Of the lower range for which

Alone such as I am fitted.

(*Placing his hand on his breast.*)

My female aspirations,

Or, say, my respirations,

Must not forget they are *stayed*;

And so must needs preserve

The even tenor—

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE, leaving door behind him open. Confusion!

It is Betsy, Alice and Gall.

FOODLE. (*To the party outside the door.*)

Just tumble along in, Misses;

This tub of ourn, as I reckon,

Can hold you, water and all.

Enter—Right Second—BETSY, ALICE and GALL

FOODLE goes on to GALL.

And you, if you wants to strip,

Just peel off there in the yard.

Exit—Right Second—FOODLE.

(BETSY, ALICE and GALL move toward the stove.)

BETSY. (*Gesturing toward FOODLE.*)

An exceeding vulgar creature!—

A very low set, here, I guess.

ALICE. (*Looking toward WINNIE and HARRY.*)

Sh—sh!—They might overhear you.

BETSY. (*Sarcastically and petulantly.*)

They might?—and what if they did?

(WINNIE and HARRY place chairs about the stove.)

WINNIE. Take seats?

HARRY. And dry yourselves.

BETSY. (*Looking sharply at HARRY, then seating herself and speaking to ALICE who seats herself in the chair held by WINNIE.*)

No wonder they send out here

For monstrosities for our museums!

ALICE. Sh—sh!—

BETSY. Why, what did I say?

I was talking, you know, about cattle.

HARRY. (*To himself, while crossing to rear of the table at center of the stage, where he busies himself with crockery and listens.*)

I am not to be flattered by her;

But, at least, can flatter myself

That my true self has not been revealed.

GALL. (*Aside.*)

As Lorn is not here to-day,

My surprise, prepared for Alice,

Might just as well be postponed.

(*To ALICE and BETSY.*)

The storm is over, I see,

Would we better be riding on?

Our climate is dryer than yours.

You will not take cold, I guess.

BETSY. Men's guesses are like their gifts.

I have found they are often bait

On a hook and line thrown out

To draw inward toward themselves.

I suppose you want to go on.

GALL. Well, Betsy, and what if I do?

BETSY. You have lived here so long, I presume,

You are dry and crusty enough

To escape being all soaked through

By a week of floods. But for me—

ALICE. Oh, Betsy, but now, you know—

BETSY. It turned out, precisely the way

That I said that it would, this morning.

The clouds were gathering then.

And yet you both would come.

ALICE. You wanted to see the cascade

Far more than I did, Betsy.

BETSY. Oh, yes, of course, of course!

I am always the one to blame.

GALL. If you prefer, we will stay.

Exit—Right Second—GALL, bowing first to WINNIE and ALICE.

WINNIE. If you will excuse me, ladies,

I will look in one of my trunks

And find, if I can, a change

Of clothing for you.

Exit—Left Upper—WINNIE.

HARRY. (*To himself.*) Good grief!

And when the clothing arrives.

I fear I may blush to see it.

ALICE. (*To BETSY, as she looks around the room.*)

What a cozy, snug little place?

BETSY. A cozy and snug! I should think so.

It smells just like a hired girl's room.

HARRY. (*Aside.*)

She is on the scent for me now.

ALICE. (*To BETSY.*)

Why will you always be thinking

Of such unsavory things?

HARRY. (*To himself.*)

Is she always thinking of me?

BETSY. Dear me!

HARRY. (*To himself.*)

I see it. She is.

BETSY. (*To ALICE.*)

Dear me! Humph! "Why will you always?"—

A characteristic question.

ALICE. Why, Betsy, I beg your pardon—

You know I meant no offense.

BETSY. The mean are mean without meaning.

You might talk, at least, ten minutes

Without insulting some one.

HARRY. (*To himself.*)

Oho!—Rather sharp, Miss Betsy!—

If one had a phonograph now

To catch and shoot back your words,

The insult might not come from Alice.

ALICE. (*To BETSY.*)

But, Betsy, I merely thought
The suggestion was not the most pleasant.

BETSY. Blame the room that suggested it then;
But, likely enough, not to you.

I was not brought up as you were.

ALICE. Our house was smaller than yours;
But my mother, I think, was a lady.

BETSY. (*Sarcastically.*)

And mine, I suppose, was not!
At least, I was taught to be clean.

ALICE. You could hardly expect things here
To be just as they are in New York.
We came because they were not so.

BETSY. Oh, yes, my fault, always mine!
Heaven knows I will not come again.

ALICE. What, what?—not if Harry came with
you?

HARRY. (*Who has evidently been getting more
and more provoked, to himself.*)

The Old Harry may always come with her.

BETSY. You think, I suppose I am just
As silly as you—

ALICE. I should scarcely
Say being in love was silly.

BETSY. You are perfectly well aware
That if I am anything, Alice,
I am sensible—practical, too.

ALICE. And I—did I hint you were not?

BETSY. You implied it, at least; and you know
That Harry is rich, very rich;
And easily managed, besides;
And so, a sensible match—

HARRY. (*To himself.*)

That presently may strike fire.
I begin to feel like a boy
Who is going to school to be licked.
Is that the way our brides kiss us?
(*Makes a movement with his tongue.*)

ALICE. Of course it is; and I said so—
That you were in love with him.

BETSY. Humph!
But that is a different thing.

HARRY. (*To himself.*)

What my old school-marm used to say,
When trying to make me spell.

ALICE. (*To BETSY.*)

But *he* is in love with you.

BETSY. That too is a different thing.

HARRY. (*To himself.*)

Oh, my!—but this school-marm here

Seems trying to *break me spell.*

ALICE. (*To BETSY.*)

He thinks you in love with him too.

BETSY. (*To ALICE.*)

And what if he does think that?

Give a woman a pair of eyes

And bring almost any man near her,

He will see his image inside them,

An image exceedingly small,

An image, too, upside down.

But a man never saw any image

Inside those eyes but his own.

HARRY. (*To himself.*)

The devil!—could see his own there.

ALICE. (*To BETSY.*)

It is well for you, Miss Betsy,

That Harry did not hear that.

HARRY. (*To himself.*)

And well for him that he did.

BETSY. And what if he did? I tell you

One beck with my little finger,

And Harry would kneel here—

HARRY. (*Whistling.*)

Whew!

BETSY. Did you hear that woman whistle?—

The most disagreeable thing!

Such eyes, and mouth, and nose.—

And such a voice, too, ugh, ugh!

One would fancy her born and cradled

Out here on a ranch, and forever

Asleep on it, catching cold,

And every night growing hoarser

By snoring.

ALICE. Sh—sh!—Why she

Can hear you; and you—you might hurt

Her feelings.

BETSY. (*Laughing sarcastically.*)

Then why should she listen?

HARRY. (*To himself.*)

To have rare dreams of the future.

I fancy that now I am wedded,

And dressed even less than I am,

Attending my evening lecture.

ALICE. (*To BETSY.*)

But you and I are to stay here;

And she might not wait on us.

BETSY. Oh!

How much you do know about servants!—

Will show you.—(*To HARRY.*)—Here, girl,
come here

And help me off with my gown.

I will pay you for it, you know.

(*BETSY rises. HARRY looks at her without moving. She continues to ALICE.*)

Did you ever see mortal so stupid?

ALICE. Perhaps she is deaf. I hope so;

And so has not overheard.

(*HARRY turns to Left Upper Entrance and tries the door.*)

BETSY. Instead of coming to us,

She seems to be going away.

HARRY. (*To himself.*)

Door locked! I suppose she is making

Some change of her own.

BETSY. (*Speaking loud, as if to a deaf person.*)

Come here!—

Do you understand me? Come here!—

Come here, and unhook my gown.

HARRY. (*To himself, as he turns and feels in the drawer under the closed closet backing at Left Center.*)

Could I only find the key,

I would take out a bottle and sip,

And pretend to be drunk.

ALICE. (*To BETSY.*)

Oh, Betsy!

We could do the thing for ourselves,

In half the time it would take

To try to get her to do it.

BETSY. Well, I have begun with this girl,

And I propose to carry it through.

We shall see how deaf she may be.

Come here, and take off my gown!

(*She goes up to HARRY and takes his hand, as if to carry it to the neck of her gown.*)

HARRY. If I take off your gown, I will peel
The skin off with it, I will;
And make you, from head to foot,
As red as a beet, I will.

(ALICE in fright retires toward Right Second Entrance.)

Enter—Right Second—GALL.

BETSY. (*Catching a sight of GALL, and therefore becoming bold.*)

You ugly, insolent creature!—
And you know no better than that?—
To talk like that to a lady?—

HARRY. Oh, a lady, are you, a lady!

BETSY. A lady, yes, from New York.

HARRY. (*Bowing and speaking sarcastically.*)

I am glad that you told me of that.
I should never have guessed it, never.
I was not brought up as you were—
Not used to your lady-like ways.

BETSY. Not used to it, eh? take this!

(*Slapping HARRY on the cheek.*)

ALICE. Oh, Betsy, Betsy, stop!—

You will get us all into trouble.

BETSY. Who cares a fig if I do?

(*Looking at GALL, who also seems to protest.*)

I say I shall make that woman
Take off my gown, I shall.

Enter—Left Upper—WINNIE.

HARRY. (*Suddenly pulling off his wig.*)

You will not. You shall keep it on.

(BETSY shrieks and sinks into a chair. ALICE
and WINNIE rush to assist her.)

CURTAIN.

ACT FOURTH.

SCENE: Same as in Act First.

(The curtain rising, discloses the traveling band of SINGERS. They are sitting or standing around a table where they have, evidently, been eating or drinking.)

FIRST SINGER. I like to get back where I have been.

SECOND SINGER. You never can get back there,
The world keeps whirling around
And grinding out something new.

FIRST SINGER. There is nothing new here.

SECOND SINGER. Who knows?—

Since we were here last week,
A good many things may have happened
To change the whole course of the lives
Of those that we met here then.

FIRST SINGER. However men may be changed,
These mountains remain the same.

SECOND SINGER. And their echoes.

THIRD SINGER. Come, start them again.

THEY SING:

Our lives are vapors forced to roam,
Of sun and storm the prey;
But cling like mists, with hills their home,
Together while they may.

Chorus: And friends, whate'er may come to you,
Join hand and voice with mine,
And swear the love that here we knew
Shall never know decline.

Our lives are vapors, whirled through skies,
Where some by storms are torn,
And some the sunlight glorifies,
And some to heaven are borne.

Chorus: But, friends, whate'er may come to you,
etc.

Our lives are vapors wrecked and lost.

None sail their journey through.

Ere long behind some blow that tost,

Will naught be left but blue.

Chorus: But, friends, whate'er may come to you,
etc.

FIRST SINGER. We must wait a full hour, I find.

Suppose that we take a walk.

SECOND SINGER. A good suggestion!

THIRD SINGER. Yes.

Exeunt—Right Front—All the SINGERS.

*Enter—Left Upper—GALL with hat and boots,
and ALICE in traveling costume.*

GALL. They scarcely can make up now.

ALICE. No; easier for a cyclone

Not to uproot a twig,

Than the way she was blowing at him

Not to uproot his love.

GALL. The engagement then will be broken?

ALICE. More certainly than the stalk

Of a twig, did you try to wipe

Its roots with its every leaf.

GALL. I have just received a note

Which shows that her friends at home

Were set on the match. You know

That Betsy has nothing.

ALICE. I know.

GALL. And is likely now to get more

Of the same commodity.

ALICE. Yes;

But she herself is to blame.

GALL. And yet I should like to help

The friends at home, if I could;

Or, at least, to say I had tried it.

ALICE. But what can we do?

GALL. (*Shrugging his shoulders.*)

Why you,

Perhaps, you might talk to her, Alice.

ALICE. You think, then, that she would listen?

GALL. Of course, always talking herself!—

It is hard to blow at a gale.

We might both of us tackle Merriman.

ALICE. And both of us might be thrown.

GALL. I fear that we might. But there—

She is coming I see; and yonder,

(Looking toward Right Front Entrance.)

Is Merriman too. Suppose
You try to blow up the one,
While I blow down the other;
It may even the temperature,
When the two are brought together.

*Enter—Left Upper—*BETSY.

*Exit—Right First—*GALL.

BETSY. I thank the heavens, at last,
We have left that stuffy old ranch;
And are nearer to civilization.
But, for one, I fail to see
Why *they* should have followed us here.

ALICE. What would you have had them do?

BETSY. Stay back there with their cows
And sheep and dogs and asses,
Stay back there, where they belong.

ALICE. But we are about to leave,
And they wanted to be polite.

BETSY. Well, I never judge of people
By what they are on the surface.

ALICE. I feared that you did—of Harry.
But, after that dressing down
You gave him, I guess—

BETSY. Better say
That, after his dressing up,
I gave him what he deserved.

ALICE. Now, Betsy, control your temper;
And try to make up to Harry.
Your match ought not to be broken;
And, at times, a trouble like this,
When coming between old friends,
Which, if cherished, would turn out a bomb
To burst and blast all love,
If treated as merely a joke
Will explode, and end in a laugh.

BETSY. But I see nothing to laugh at.
He insulted us both so grossly.
It is hardly once in a life time,
That one could be more insulted;
He made us think him a servant.
It was all his fault.

ALICE. Perhaps
He may judge of it so, himself.
You can treat it as half a joke,

And half a mistake, you know.

BETSY. It was all a mistake—and his—

His putting on that girl's gown;

And staying with her alone!—

A bold, bad girl that she is.

ALICE. But if she be bold and bad,

He had a good chance, at least,

To find it out, you know.

BETSY. So you are defending him, eh?—

I had not supposed coming west

Was going to corrupt you, too.

ALICE. But the reasons have all been explained..

BETSY. Not a word, would I believe

That either of them could say.

Not a word—you know it too!

You are just as bad as they are.

(Beginning to cry.)

ALICE. Come, Betsy, come, cheer up.

When you reach New York, once more,

The people will be to your taste.

Enter—Right Upper—GALL.

BETSY. They will not go sneaking around

Dressed up like girls.

GALL. *(Aside.)* No, no;

How fortunate! If they did,

Very few of them might marry.

(To BETSY.)

This is merely a matter of taste.

I, Betsy, although a man,

Would very much rather have seen

A live man dressed like a girl

Than a dead man dressed not at all.

BETSY. *(Indignantly.)*

You horrid!

GALL. It would have been one,

If not the other, I take it.

Enter—Right First—HARRY.

But here is your friend. He has come

To make up, perhaps; and, Alice,

I want you here for a moment.

Exeunt—Left First—ALICE and GALL.

HARRY. *(To BETSY.)*

We have been good friends.

BETSY. *(Embarrassed and hypocritically.)*

Yes, yes;

It is good of you, Harry, it is,

- To come and make up, once more.
Such a joke, you know, such a joke!
- HARRY. A practical joke; yes, yes!
- BETSY. And you really thought it was not?
- HARRY. (*With concealed sarcasm.*)
Oh, no; I thought that it was.
- BETSY. (*Rather suspiciously.*)
And so see something to laugh at?
- HARRY. (*Looking at her.*)
Oh, yes; I see something to laugh at.
- BETSY. Yes, Harry, of course; it is like you,
I felt you could see the joke.
(*Artificially.*)
And all will be just the same
As if you had been always a man,
You bad thing, and I—
- HARRY. A lady?
- BETSY. You have always known, now, Harry,
How much I have thought of you, yes?
- HARRY. You used some very strange language
About me there on the ranch.
- BETSY. But I was provoked, you know.
- HARRY. I see.—Are you often provoked?
- BETSY. I lost myself then; and you—
- HARRY. I discovered you?
- BETSY. (*With a decided change of manner.*)
Well, I suppose
You think it an honest thing
To disguise yourself, and listen
To what was meant for another.
- HARRY. The lightning from a clear sky
Never burst upon one more quickly
Than you upon me in that guise.
How could I have been more embarrassed?
This fact, at first, and then
The drift of what you were saying
Made explanations from me
Impossible. Who could have made them—
Without being too impolite?
- BETSY. And yet you could be insulting?
- HARRY. Now, pardon me, but, Miss Blinder,
You were first insulting to me.
- BETSY. To you—oh, no!—to the servant.
- HARRY. True courtesy shows itself
To the least as well as the greatest.
If once a lady then always.

BETSY. If once a gentleman, always—

HARRY. What I tried to prevent, when first
I came on you dressed as a girl,
I did not prevent. My appearance
I see disenchanted you.

BETSY. Yes.

HARRY. Then, for one, if it had to happen,
Thank God that it came when it did!

BETSY. I suppose that too is polite.

HARRY. (*Pointing toward the restaurant, and offering his arm.*)

Shall I take you into your luncheon?

BETSY. (*Drawing back stifly.*)

I prefer to go by myself.

Exit—Right Second—BETSY, with a sarcastic bow.

HARRY. (*To himself.*)

I think that better accords

With the way in which she was brought up.

I want to be kind and just,

And to do what is fit; and yet,

To be kind to her—real kind—

One should treat her like one of her kind;

To be just to her—real just—

One ought to do just as she does;

And to fit her moods—fit well—

One ought to get into her fit.

I will not. I have tried something else

That fits me a great deal better.

Enter—Left Upper—GALL and WINNIE, unseen by HARRY.

GALL. (*To WINNIE.*)

Oh, there is your friend over there!

Would you like to speak to him now?

WINNIE. (*Looking back toward Left Upper Entrance.*)

I will speak to my brother here first;

And be back in a moment.

Exit—Left Upper—WINNIE.

GALL. (*Looking carefully at HARRY, then advancing and placing his hand on his shoulder.*)

Why what

Is the matter?—You seem excited?

HARRY. I have been.

GALL. Humph, humph! you are.—

Your engagement?—

HARRY. She broke it.

GALL. She did?

I thought that must follow; and you?—

HARRY. When some things break, you know,
They bring—

GALL. A wrench?

HARRY. No—a *snap*.

GALL. (*Shaking his hand violently.*)

Congratulate you.

HARRY. I thank you.

You know what reasons I have.

But being her uncle, you might—

GALL. I married her mother's own sister;

And I—I mean what I say.

(*Shaking HARRY's hand vigorously, then seeing
WINNIE.*)

Enter—Left Upper—WINNIE.

But I think, just now, I am wanted—

Away from here. Good-bye!

Exit—Right First—GALL.

WINNIE. (*To HARRY.*)

I have brought a package of letters

That Foodle saved from the clothes

That the men were robbing you of.

I had almost forgotten about them.

(*Handing HARRY a package of letters.*)

HARRY. I thank you; and more for your riding

Out here to see us all off.

WINNIE. The most thanks are due from us.

HARRY. How so?

WINNIE. For saving the ranch

From the boys when they wanted to drink.

HARRY. It was you that had first saved me.

And, Miss Lorn, do you know I am thinking

That you have been saving me, too,

Not alone from those threatening men,

But threatening—

WINNIE. What?

HARRY. No matter!

Had you heard that I was engaged?

WINNIE. Mr. Gall has told me about it.

HARRY. And told you who was the lady?

WINNIE. His neice, he said—Miss Blinder.

HARRY. But you know the row that we had?

WINNIE. We ought not to talk about her.

HARRY. But you were the one to blame.

WINNIE. But I—I had no means—

HARRY. I got—nothing mean from you—
Were responsible nevertheless.

WINNIE. For what?

HARRY. My appearance in skirts.

They disenchanted her, yes.

My suit was not a success.

That suit you had forced upon me;

You forced upon me a *suit*—

Do you understand?—What say you?

(*Taking her hand. WINNIE draws back.*)

Do you like me best in—kilts?—

I am going away to-day;

And may not see you for years.

WINNIE. Of course we had a good time;

But when you get back to the East,

Are you perfectly sure that a man

Of the world like you—

HARRY. I am sure

That a man of the world like me

Should have found all the sport that he wants

With *gamboling* lambs all about

And a *Paradise*—

WINNIE. Joking now!

HARRY. Oh, no; I am not—just try me.

I should like to be tried for my life—

As I was on the ranch; and tied

By ranch hands, too, that I know.

(*Taking one of her hands in each of his.*)

WINNIE. But they set you free.

HARRY. No, no;

They made me a slave—Humph!—Foodle!

Enter—Left Second—FOODLE.

FOODLE. It would be a mighty good thing

If some of you folks could tell

Which baggage here is your own.

Exit—Left Second—FOODLE.

HARRY. Just what I wanted to know.

Could you solve the problem for me?

Exeunt—Left Second—WINNIE and HARRY.

Enter—Right Second—GALL and BETSY.

BETSY. I wonder I ever gave him

A civil word in my life!

GALL. I guess he wonders the same.

Truth is, you were off your guard.

The door of your heart stood ajar.

BETSY. You mean—

GALL. I mean, Miss Betsy,

That all your talk to that servant,
And of that servant and Harry,
Was unkind with the hollow ring
Of a heart not filled with love.

BETSY. His insult had been so gross!—

I lost my temper, and then—

GALL. Perhaps he had never learned

What women take for insults.

He has never been married, you know.

BETSY. You are getting sarcastic, uncle.

How could I be civil to him?—

A man half-dressed, and in skirts.

GALL. A true lady never is civil

To one on account of his dress.

For my part, I wish that all men,

Who ever expect to be married,

Could get into a woman's clothes

Before they get into her clutches.

BETSY. And what would they find, pray, in there?

GALL. Why, first, a good deal of sham.

You know what a maid is?

BETSY. What?

GALL. Why, what but a thing that is *made*?

BETSY. That is scarcely a new accusation.

GALL. Few very true thoughts are new ones.

There are some society women;

And you are one of them, Betsy,

Who in character often seem

Just what they are in appearance.

Three fourths of their substance is dress;

And all of the soft sleek satin

And silk is on the outside.

BETSY. And what on the inside, pray?

GALL. Well, very extensively, pins.

BETSY. (*Wiping her eyes, as if crying.*)

You are cruel.

GALL. A cry is much better

Than never washing the rouge off.

BETSY. And barbarous!

GALL. Wish I could make

Your soul as clean as a barber

Can make my face!

BETSY. You know

I have always been good and religious.

GALL. And so were those who stabbed
And killed the martyrs of old.
They were all of them very religious.
But not even their daggers could wound
Like the sting of a woman's tongue.
For that can kill the soul.
If ever you marry, Betsy,
Your husband's hand may be hard;
And his face have a beard like a bear's
But, simply because he is human,
His heart may be soft as a babe's;
And the one needs a woman's love
As much as ever the other.
He would never have asked for this love
Had he failed to need it, Betsy.
Most young men, too, imagine
That the woman they love is an angel.
She is not, of course; but they think so.
And if, when you get them married,
And they come to you for rest,
With as holy a feeling as if
They were coming to heaven itself,—
If then, you sting, merely sting them,
The devil himself could not match
Your driving them down to hell;
And when you have driven them there,
Your prayers, your meetings, your psalm-tunes,
Your beads, your Bibles, your prayer-books,
Your charities and your virtues
Can never conjure one charm
To keep the devil away
From them or from you.

BETSY. You are losing
Your self-control.

GALL. Are you frightened?—
I wish I could frighten the devil
That lives inside of you, out of you.
I have just had a note here, Betsy,
And all of your friends, at home,
Are talking about this match
As the one bright hope of your life.
I know what has broken it now;
And I mean you shall learn a lesson.
You may have another chance yet;
But whether you do or not,
I pray to God that the joy

Of yourself and your mate may not all
Be hung on the slender thread
Of your not having been found out!
You ought to take on a new heart
That, when found out, can be loved.

Exeunt—Right First—BETSY and GALL.

Enter—Left Upper—ALICE and LORN.

ALICE. (*To LORN.*)

At times, you can get away then?

LORN. I can; and now, my friend,

That all is made up between us—

ALICE. We may hope to see you soon?

LORN. Hope looks above itself.

It is I that should have the hope.

ALICE. True worth seems always above

The lives that feel that they need it.

Enter—Left Upper—WINNIE and HARRY.

HARRY. (*Taking WINNIE'S hand and standing in front of LORN.*)

But would your brother accept me?

LORN. (*Startled for a moment, then shaking HARRY'S hand vigorously, then WINNIE'S.*)

Most heartily, yes. Why, Winnie,

If you are to leave the ranch,

Perhaps I will leave it, myself.

But whether you do or not,

You are paid in your own coin now

In the shape of this new sister.

(*Waiving his hand toward ALICE, who shakes hands with WINNIE and kisses her, then both shake hands with HARRY.*)

HARRY. (*To LORN.*)

But from what I have heard of you,

You ought to have married before.

LORN. In the words of the one who controlled her,

I had to wait until

I had shown myself a man.

HARRY. And I had to wait until

I had shown myself a woman.

WINNIE. (*To HARRY.*)

No, no; do not flatter yourself.

You played the part pretty well;

But you did not look it, Harry,

And you did not work it, at all.

LORN. You hardly seem very sorry
For that.

WINNIE. Not very. I like him
For what he really is.

HARRY. (*To WINNIE.*)

That is just why I like you.

I am not the only one here

That has shown himself when playing

The ranch girl. You, my Winnie,

Have shown—as clearly as light—

Amid all that might rid the ranch

Of the rules of the drawing room, yes,

That you are one who could never

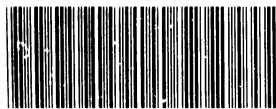
Be anything less than a lady.

(LORN, ALICE, HARRY, WINNIE.)

CURTAIN.

END.

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